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**Statement from Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell on  
Governor Nixon's proposal to increase higher-education funding**

We applaud Governor Nixon's decision to increase Missouri's investment in higher education, as described in his State of the State address last evening. The governor's proposals for higher education hold great promise for our students and the future prosperity of our state.

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education and our public colleges and universities are working hard to improve access to educational opportunities and to retain our students until they complete requirements for a high-quality two- or four-year degree or professional certificate.

Governor Nixon's proposed budget would provide additional funding to the state's two- and four-year colleges and universities based on their success in meeting statewide performance goals. It would expand state financial aid programs to assist Missouri students with the cost of higher education, and tackle the chronic shortage of mental health care professionals who provide much-needed care for our most vulnerable citizens. The governor's proposal to increase the number of students studying science, technology, engineering and math will help develop the world-class workforce Missouri needs to support a strong economy and sustain a good quality of life.